

On choosing friends

First sermon

All the praise and thank be to Allah, who has fostered mutual affection amongst His servants, making them intimate with each other. I bear witness there is no deity worthy of worship save Him Alone, having no partners. I also certify that Muhammad is the Servant of Allah and His Messenger. He was the best friend and companion, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, his family, his companions, and all those who will follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

O Servants of Allah, I urge you and myself to obey Allah the Almighty as He says, **“O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true.”** (Attawba: 119).

Dear Muslims,

Friendship is a fine human relation and a strong social bond. It brings individuals together based on love, support, harmony, honesty, mutual advising and respect, compatibility in thought and vision. As such people are naturally inclined to seek friendship out of a desire for intimacy and coexistence. Allah, the most Exalted, says, **“There is not upon the blind [any] constraint nor upon the lame constraint nor upon the ill constraint nor upon yourselves when you eat from your [own] houses or the houses of your fathers or the houses of your mothers or the houses of your brothers or the houses of your sisters or the houses of your father's brothers or the houses of your father's sisters or the houses of your mother's brothers or the houses of your mother's sisters or [from houses] whose keys you possess or [from the house] of your friend. There is no blame upon you whether you eat together or separately.”** (Annur: 61).

It is interesting to reflect on how Allah, the Most Exalted, has made the status of friends as equal to oneself, the father, brother and son when it comes to trust and intimacy. As an example, He allows us to feel free to enter our friends' houses and eat there, highlighting the fact that friendship is a bond of love and one of the most sincere human ties. About it, Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, *“friendship is stronger than kinship.”*

This is evidenced in many cases when people would help their friends in crises before they do so for their relatives? They rush to stand by them through thick and thin. It was narrated that Qatada said, *“if a friend is virtuous, he turns to be beneficial.”*

Dear Servants of Allah,

Friendship defines the friend's behaviour and is tested at times of adversity. That is why our Prophet Muhammad pbuh warned us to be careful when selecting friends. He said, *“A man is upon the religion of his friend, so let one of you look at*

whom he makes his friend.” A friend either takes you to where good is or leads you to a doomed path.

On this matter, our Guide pbuh said, *“the similitude of good company and that of bad company is that of the owner of musk and of the one blowing the bellows. The owner of musk would either offer you some free of charge, or you would buy it from him, or you smell its pleasant fragrance; and as for the one who blows the bellows (i.e., the blacksmith), he either burns your clothes or you smell a repugnant smell.”*

One of the most evident characteristics of a good company is faith and piety, about which the Prophet pbuh said, *“do not accompany except a believer.”* So any ill-founded friendship is likely to cause the person regret in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah, the most Exalted, says, **“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”** (Azzukhruf: 67).

Everyone one of us must be careful in choosing his friends and be cautious of those who pretend to be friendly, only for some personal gains. Indeed many would have caused their fellow friends much distress and trouble as a result of their erroneous thoughts and mischievous purposes. In Arabic *Assahib* (the word for company in English) is often likened to a closely similar word in spelling and pronunciation, but literally means a *dragger*, a connotation of someone who has a strong and bad influence on someone else.

It was said, *“Tell me with whom you associate, and I will tell you who you are.”* A poet also said, *“Ask not about the person but about who he accompanies. For everyone emulates whom he associates with.”*

Parents are therefore advised to ask about the kind of friends their children have. So, if they are good company, in favour of right things, they should be encouraged to associate with them. However, if they are bad company, parents should warn their children to stay away from them. Indeed, a friend is a mirror reflecting his friend. Advising his son, the wise Luqman said, *“he who accompanies bad friends shall be misled, yet who accompanies good fellows shall win.”*

Dear Muslims,

Watch over your children so that they have friends who guide to good things, and chose those with noble intentions and honest goals. A true friend is the one who is sincerely fond of you, wishing for you all that is good. Our Prophet pbuh said, *“The companion who is the best to Allah is the one who is best to his companion.”* With this in mind, we seek Allah’s favour to guide us and our children to choose the right friends. May Allah help us to obey Him and those He has ordained upon us to obey pursuant to His instructions: **“O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.”** (Annisaa: 59).

May Allah bless you and me with the ability to implement the Holy Quran and the Sunna of His Messenger Muhammad pbuh. I say my words and pray to Allah, the Almighty, to grant us forgiveness. Supplicate to Allah for forgiveness for He is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful.

Second sermon

All praise is due to Allah. I bear witness there is no deity but Him, having no partners. I also bear witness that our Master Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger, may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his pure Family, his Companions and all those who will follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

O Believers, obey Allah and know that one of the most important things that parents and teachers should observe is to direct their children and students to choose righteous friends, ones who love their nation and are beneficial to their community. This is because most problems and delinquencies faced by children and youth are due to bad companions. The latter tend to harbour evil for others. So consider to have a friend with whom you can keep company safely and with whom you will be resurrected in Paradise.

Addressing his son, the wise Luqman said, *“O my son, use your wisdom when selecting people you sit with. So if you find some who remember Allah, then join them. If you are knowledgeable, then your knowledge will benefit you, and if you are ignorant, they will teach you. What’s more, Allah may bestow His Mercy upon them and you will be among them. But if you find people who do not remember Allah, then do not sit with them. [At their presence] even if you are knowledgeable, your knowledge will be of no avail. And if you are ignorant, they will add to your incapacity. Allah may inflict punishment on them and you will be among them.”*

O children and young people, obey Allah for the sake of yourselves, your families, your friends and your nation. You are urged to live up to the situation, lending support to the wise leadership and defending the nation. Also your duty is to stay away from misdeeds, more than anyone else, and strongly engage in good deeds. In this regard, Dubai Police has launched a campaign against bad companionship, to which we all are invited to help materialise, starting from our households and amongst our families. The aim is to bring into focus the landmark role of the truthful friend in the community

Dear Muslims,

Allah has asked you to abide by an order He has been the first to undertake, then His angels, for He says, "Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace." (Al Ahzab : 56).

The Prophet pbuh said, "for everyone who invokes a blessing on me will receive ten blessings from Allah." May the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon our Master Muhammad pbuh, his family and all his Companions. May Allah be pleased with the Rightly Guided Caliphs and all those who will follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

O Allah, we seek Your favour to let our hearts be full of Your gratitude and keep our tongue moist with Your remembrance. May Allah bless us with good provision, accepted work, well-being in mind and body and blessed living life and progeny. O Allah guide us to know what is good, make us benefit from what we have learnt, and increase our knowledge.

O Allah, Give us piety and purify our souls. You are the Master and the Lord of souls. O Sustainer, amend our intentions, grant that our spouses and our offspring be a joy to our eyes and make success be an ally to us. O Allah, give us rain and do not make us among the despondent. O Allah, relieve us, O Allah, relieve us, O Allah, relieve us.

O Allah, we implore You at this instant not to let a sin unforgiven, a distress unrelieved, an illness unhealed or a handicapped without relief, a dead without mercy or a debt unsettled. Our Lord, give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire. May Allah grant our leader HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan and his Deputy, HH Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, success and provide strength and assistance to his brothers, Their Highness The Rulers of the Emirates, and his trustworthy Crown Prince HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. O Allah, forgive all of the Muslims, men and women, living and dead, and make blessings follow us and them. May Allah have mercy on Sheikh Zayed and Sheikh Maktoum and all their brothers, the Late UAE Sheikhs. O Lord, forgive and show mercy, You are the Ever Merciful and there is no strength or power save with Allah, the High, the Great.

We pray to Allah, the Most Gracious, to continue blessing the UAE and all Muslim countries with safety and security.

O servants of Allah, remember Allah and He will remember you. Be grateful for His benevolence He will increase His blessings to you. Allah, the Most High, says, "And establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do." (Al Ankaboot: 45).